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Martha's 'Ultimatum'

By Helen Thomas

Martha Mitchell says that she had given her husband an "ultimatum to get out of politics" or she would leave him.

The wife of former Attorney General John N. Mitchell told this reporter of her unhappiness with the state of affairs during a telephone call Thursday night which she initiated from Newport Beach, Calif., where she has been visiting for the past week.

Mrs. Mitchell, recounting a bad week in which among other things she accidentially burned her hand, spoke of her dislike of politics in response to aquestion about how she felt about the alleged break-in and attempted bugging of Democratic national headquarters here.

"I gave him an ultimatum," she said. "I'm sick and tired of the whole operation."

The conversation ended abruptly when it appeared someone took away the phone from her hand. She was heard to say: "You just get away!"

The connection was broken and her suite at a motel refused attempts to restore it. "Mrs. Mitchell is indisposed and cannot talk," the operator said.

Reached at his Washington apartment, Mitchell expressed amusement at his wife's turning to the telephone—her trademark as a public figure—in her upset. He confirmed that politics was a bome of contention between them, and said he was a bone of contention about it.

"Martha has never been happy with me in politics," he said, explaining that she wanted to return to the life they had had in New York where he had a highly successful law practice.

"We have a compact," he confided. "We have agreed we're goingto get the hell out of this gambit. We aren't going to be in Washington after No. 7. We're going to leave lock stock and barrel. We have that understanding. We're going to get out of this rat race. We have no interest."

Mitchell reluctantly agreed to head President Nixon's re-election campaign and resigned from the cabinet some months ago. He also was Nixon's 1968 campaign manager.

Mitchell indicated he didn't mind his wife's going to the press with her troubles, and said of her: "This is the greatest political phenomenon that has ever hit this country. I would like her to speak at any time."

Mitchell sai his wife's sister and a secretary were with her in California and it was probably one of them who sought to stop her phone call.

"She's great," he said. "That little sweetheart. I love her so much. She gets a little upset about politics, but she loves me and I love her and that's what counts."

Mitchell said his determinaton to depart the Washington political scene after the election underscored his adamant rejection of taking on another Washington job, in the cabinet or elsewhere. Asked if that included a Supreme Court appointment, as sometimes rumored, he said it did.

The Mitchells were in California together. Last weekend, where they were honored along with First Lady Pat Nixon at a VIP Hollywood-style party tossed by Taft Schrieber, president of Music Incorporated of America, at his plush Beverly Hills home. California Governor and Mrs. Ronald Reagan and pro-Republican movie stars such as John Wayne were in attendance.